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PRESS RELEASE

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New USAID Adolescent Health Activity To Benefit Two Million Urban Youth

Abuja – On February 24, 2021, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the new activity designed to empower as many as two million young Nigerians with life skills and resources to realize their futures.

The five-year, \$15 million Youth-powered Ecosystem to Advance Urban Adolescent Health Project (Adolescent Health) will help teens access reproductive health services within a holistic context of youth empowerment. It will be coupled with a deeper understanding of the challenges that adolescents face and implemented in Nigeria's two largest cities, Lagos and Kano.

“By investing in youth, USAID is helping prepare the next generation to lead Nigeria to a more healthy and prosperous society,” said Health Office Director Paul McDermott, who joined Minister of Health Dr. Osagie Ehanaiye at the virtual launch ceremony. He continued, “young people can make a strong contribution to a more productive and prosperous Nigeria if they are healthy and informed.”

Nigeria's burgeoning urban youth population includes an increasingly marginalized segment of individuals-- who might be out-of-school, unmarried, or poor. They are also vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancies and face barriers to accessing reliable health information. Thus far, traditional programs have struggled to meet these needs.

Adolescent Health will build a network of Youth Hubs to provide age-appropriate access to a host of services, and teach life skills, leadership, and work readiness. Through partnerships with the private sector, the activity will connect adolescents to internships and employment opportunities.

The Hubs will provide safe spaces for adolescents to receive information and support to uptake reproductive health and improved behaviors through regular interventions, club meetings, youth-led events, groups, camps, and other community outreach and events.

They will also improve access to counseling and referrals, youth-friendly health providers, gender-based violence services, substance abuse, and mental health programs. In addition, an associated Youth Advisory Council, composed of 60 percent girls, will provide insights and inputs to the Hubs, thereby developing their leadership and decision-making skills.

“We must devise ways and mechanisms to continually improve the general health, skill acquisition and overall development of the Nigerian youth,” said Tobi Bakre, 25-year-old reality star and Youth Ambassador for the new activity. “I implore every Nigerian to get involved.”

The activity will be implemented by Development Alternatives Incorporated, in partnership with Grassroot Soccer, Women Friendly Initiative, Yellow Brick Road and the Youth Empowerment and Development Initiative.

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***ABOUT USAID:** USAID leads international development and humanitarian efforts to save lives, reduce poverty, strengthen democratic governance and help people progress beyond assistance, supports transparent and accountable governance, promotes a more market-led economy, and enhances Nigeria’s capacity as a responsible regional and trade partner. For more information about USAID and its programs, please visit www.usaid.gov. Follow us [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).*

PHOTO CAPTION: “We must devise ways and mechanisms to continually improve the general health, skill acquisition and overall development of the Nigerian youth.” – Tobi Bakre, USAID Youth Ambassador

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